

which kept pace with these moving parties of Crees during the summer months of 1870. By streams and lakes, in willow copses, and upon bare hill sides, often shelterless from the fierce rays of the summer sun, and exposed to the rains and dews of night, the poor plague stricken wretches lay down to die. No assistance of any kind, for the ties of family were quickly loosened and mothers abandoned their helpless children upon the wayside, fleeing onward to some fancied place of safety. The district lying between Fort Pitt and Victoria, a distance of about 140 miles, was perhaps the scene of the greatest suffering.

In the immediate neighborhood of Fort Pitt, two camps of Crees established themselves, at first in the hope of obtaining medical assistance and failing in that, for the officer in charge soon exhausted his slender store, they appear to have endeavoured to convey the infection into the Fort, in the belief that by doing so they would cease to suffer from it themselves. The dead bodies were left unburied close to the stockades, and frequently Indians in the worst stage of the disease might be seen trying to force an entrance into the houses, or rubbing portion of the scab from their persons against the door handles and window frames of the dwellings. It is singular that only three persons within the fort should have been infected with the disease, and I can only attribute the comparative immunity enjoyed by the residents at that post to the fact that Mr. John Sinclair had taken the precaution early in the summer to vaccinate all the persons residing there, having obtained the vaccine matter from a Salteaux Indian who had been vaccinated at the mission of Prince Albert, presided over by Rev. Mr. Nesbit, sometime during the spring. In this matter of vaccination a very important difference appears to have existed between the Upper and Lower Saskatchewan. At the settlement of St. Albert near Edmonton the opinion prevails that vaccination was of little or no avail to check the spread of the disease, while on the contrary residents on the lower portion of the Saskatchewan assert that they cannot trace a single case in which death had ensued after vaccination had been properly performed. I attribute this difference of opinion upon the benefits resulting from vaccination to the fact that the vaccine matter used at St. Albert and Edmonton was of a spurious description, having been brought from Fort Benton, on the Missouri River, by traders during the early summer, and that also it was used when the disease had reached its height, while on the other hand the vaccination carried on from Mr. Nesbit's Mission appears to have been commenced early in the spring and also to have been of a genuine description.

At the Mission of St. Albert, called also "Big Lake," the disease assumed a most malignant form; the infection appears to have been introduced into the settlement from two different sources almost at the same period. The summer hunting party met the Blackfeet on the plains and visited the Indian camp (then infected with small pox) for the purpose of making peace and trading. A few days later the disease appeared among them and swept off half their number in a very short space of time. To such a degree of helplessness were they reduced that when the prairie fires broke out in the neighbourhood of their camp they were unable to do anything towards arresting its progress or saving their property. The fire swept through the camp destroying a number of horses, carts and tents, and the unfortunate people returned to their homes at Big Lake carrying the disease with them. About the same time some of the Crees also reached the settlement, and the infection thus communicated from both quarters, spread with amazing rapidity. Out of a total population numbering about 900 souls 600 caught the disease, and up to the date of my departure from Edmonton (22nd December,) 311 deaths had occurred. Nor is this enormous percentage of deaths very much to be wondered at when we consider the circumstances attending this epidemic. The people huddled together in small hordes, were destitute of medical assistance or of even the most ordinary requirements of the hospital. During the period of delirium incidental to small pox, they frequently wandered forth at night into the open air, and remained for hours exposed to dew or rain; in the latter stages of the disease they took no precautions against cold and frequently died from relapse produced by exposure, on the other hand they appear to have suffered but little pain after the primary fever passed away. "I have frequently, says Pere Andre, "asked a man in the last stages of small pox, whose end was close at hand, if he was suffering much pain, and the almost invariable